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July 9, 2008

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"Too many of our brave men and women who have made personal sacrifices to defend our country now find themselves with no place to call home," said Rep. Melancon. "The Homes for Heroes Act will help homeless veterans find permanent housing and provide them with support services to get them back on their feet."

The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that more than 400,000 veterans are homeless at some point during the year. It also estimates that nearly 200,000 veterans are homeless on any given night.

The Homes for Heroes Act establishes a \$200 million a year assistance program for supportive housing and services for low-income homeless veterans and their families at HUD. It also makes at least 20,000 rental housing vouchers a year available to homeless veterans and their families.

Rep. Melancon continued, "We owe our veterans an enormous debt of gratitude, and I am proud to support this assistance for the most vulnerable among them."

Below is an overview of some of the key provisions in H.R. 3329.

- **Establishes a supportive housing program at HUD for low-income veterans.** The bill authorizes \$200 million in FY 2008 and such sums as may be necessary in subsequent years for an assistance program at HUD for supportive housing and services for low-income veterans. Specifically, the bill authorizes grants to nonprofit organizations and consumer cooperatives to expand the supply of permanent housing for low-income veterans and their families and to provide supportive services through such housing to support the needs of such

veteran families.

- **Requires HUD to provide at least 20,000 rental vouchers a year for homeless veterans.** The bill also expands the highly successful Department of Housing and Urban Development - Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH), authorizing 20,000 rental vouchers annually and making the program permanent.

- **Establishes the position of Special Assistant for Veterans Affairs within HUD.** The bill requires HUD to create a position within the department to serve as the liaison to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Among other things, the liaison would ensure that the owners of housing projects assisted under the bill have the managerial capacity to assess on an ongoing basis the service needs of residents, coordinate the provision of supportive services, and tailor such services to the individual needs of residents.

- **Requires a comprehensive annual report on homeless veterans.** The bill requires HUD to submit a comprehensive annual report to Congress on the housing needs of homeless veterans and the steps HUD has taken under the programs provided for in the bill.

- **Ensures veterans' families continued assistance.** The bill allows veterans' families to continue to receive the assistance provided for in the bill in the event of the veteran's death.

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